

REMARKS

The claims of the application have been revised by canceling claims 1 to 19 and presenting new claims 20 to 36. The new claims have been carefully drafted to recite the invention in clear terms that distinctly claim and particularly point out the invention. As will be noted, the invention is a vehicle outfitted in the manner recited in new claim 20. In greater detail, claim 20 recites the invention to be a vehicle having a vehicle body with side walls, a rear structure, seats for occupants and a planar loading area behind the rearmost seats extending between the vehicle sidewalls to the rear structure. The rear structure of the vehicle includes a rear hatch that can swing open to expose and render accessible the loading area. A loading edge with a predetermined vertical height extends across the loading area and is interconnected to the vehicle sidewalls. A first horizontal guide channel is formed in each vehicle side wall at a vertical height above the loading area that is greater than the predetermined vertical height of the loading edge. The first horizontal guide channel extends from the vehicle rear structure forward toward the rearmost seats and terminates at its forward end spaced from the rearmost seats. A second vertically depending downwardly guide channel is formed in each vehicle side wall extending forwardly at an acute angle from and as a continuation of the forward end of the first horizontal guide channel in that vehicle sidewall and terminates at its lower end at the plane of the loading area adjacent but spaced from the rearmost seats of the vehicle. A third vertically depending downwardly guide channel is formed in each vehicle side wall extending forwardly at an acute angle from a point intermediate the ends of the first horizontal guide channel in that vehicle sidewall as a branch of the first horizontal guide channel and terminates at its lower end at the plane of the loading area. An elongated loading floor lies adjacent the plane of the loading area and extends laterally of the vehicle from one vehicle side to the other vehicle side and longitudinally of the vehicle from adjacent the rearmost seats to adjacent the rear structure to substantially cover the entire loading area. A first pair of guide members is mounted on the loading floor and

positioned respectively in the second vertically depending downwardly guide channels at their lower terminal ends for cooperation therewith. A second pair of guide members is mounted on the loading floor and positioned respectively in the third vertically depending downwardly guide channels at their lower terminal ends for cooperation therewith. The structure and arrangement is such that when the rear hatch of the vehicle is open, and a force is exerted upon the loading floor in a rearward direction, the loading floor will rise up vertically to the level of the first guide channels and then move rearwardly over the loading edge and out the open rear of the vehicle.

The invention recited in claim 20 is characterized by an integration of the vehicle and the loading floor that simplifies the vehicle interior and enables easy pulling out and pushing in of the loading floor.

Claim 20 is the only independent claim, and all other claims, 21 to 36, are dependent on claim 20, and include all the limitations of claim 20. As immediately evident, none of the prior art cited and applied is relevant to the invention claimed in claim 20. For instance, Nydam, US Pat. No. 3,768,673 shows a load carrying platform that is simply put in the flat bed of a pick-up truck. The recited limitations in claim 20 with respect to the guide channels and side walls of the vehicle, and the rear structure including the rear hatch and the loading edge of predetermined vertical height are completely absent from Nydam, for the simple reason that Nydam is dealing with an entirely different situation.

Similarly, Hems, US Pat. No. 4,457,663, relates to a loading ramp for wheelchairs. The ramp is pivoted out of the vehicle to a position as shown in Figs. 1 and 3 to enable a wheelchair to be positioned on the ramp, attached to it, and pulled into the vehicle all as shown and described. The ramp, however, does not in any way shape or form comport with the limitations of claim 20.

The references cited, but not applied, are even more irrelevant, if that is a possibility.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

It is respectfully requested that, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time, time sufficient, to effect a timely response, and shortages in this or other fees, be charged, or any overpayment in fees be credited, to the Deposit Account of the undersigned, Account No. 500601 (Docket no. 7390-X03-024)

Respectfully submitted,



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